



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

JAN 28 2010

Mr. Ron Hull
Central Appalachia Mining, LLC
265 Hambley Boulevard
Pikeville, Kentucky 41501

Dear Mr. Hull:

This letter is a follow-up to our previous letter dated December 16, 2009, concerning the proposed Big Branch surface mine project (DA # 2004-1400; KDMRE # 898-0792) in Pike County, Kentucky and our conference call on January 27, 2010. The previous correspondence notified Central Appalachia Mining (CAM) of a required response to provide the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 with the requested information by February 2, 2010. During the conference call, you indicated a need for additional time to complete the Kentucky Fill Placement Optimization Process on the entire project and that you could provide interim products during an extension. Per CAM's request, in order to ensure a quality work product, EPA is granting an extension of thirty (30) days beyond the February 2, 2010, response date to provide more time for review and completion/finalization of the response package.

In order to balance our regulatory responsibility with respect to the timeframes set out in the regulations and the need to fully consider and discuss the forthcoming reports, we have determined that extending the timeframe, in accordance with 40 CFR Part 231, for an additional thirty (30) days to March 4, 2010, is appropriate. We believe that such an extension is suitable to allow CAM to complete their analysis and provide the results of their findings and previously requested information to EPA. This timeframe will allow both organizations to fully consider and discuss CAM's findings and address EPA's concerns. As interim products are available please forward them to EPA to help expedite the final review. We anticipate contacting CAM to set up a meeting to discuss the findings once we have had the opportunity to review the final reports, preferably no later than March 19, 2010.

I appreciate your cooperation during this process. I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your findings and any remaining concerns EPA may have.

If you should have any questions, please contact Todd Bowers at (404) 562-9225.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. C. Welborn', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas C. Welborn
Chief
Wetlands, Coastal and Oceans Branch

Cc: Colonel Dana R. Hurst, District Engineer
Huntington District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Huntington, West Virginia 25701-2070